After reading all 138 comments (the current total), I found several points I'd like to address beyond my own previous comment.

1) There's been a recurring assertion that wideband SSB operation is restricted to a limited area in the HF spectrum -- 14.178 mHz has been mentioned several times. In fact, none of my negative encounters with wideband SSB ops have been on that frequency. The first was about a year ago on the lower portion of 40m, when a QSO I was participating in was completely blanked out by QRM. When I investigated, it became obvious from the virtual carrier's location that the offending sig had to be at least 6kHz wide, and 3kHz of that was directly overlapping our QSO. One participant was commenting about how he'd jumped his selectivity filter and was injecting audio directly into his balanced modulator.

The most recent encounter was on 18157.5 mHz earlier this year during a weekend QSO when many HFpackers (who specialize in low power portable ops) were on. West coast stations were suddenly clobbered by very wide SSB sigs. Attempts to get them to move were completely ignored.

In my own experience, wideband SSB ops are most certainly not limited to 14.178, or even a single band like 20m.

2) See William Sabin's and James Whedbee's well-reasoned comments. They present good technical arguments for a bandwidth limitation. I still think that 3.0kHz at the -3dB points is best for SSB. I believe increasing the AM max bandwidth to 6.0kHz would alleviate Mr. Whedbee's worry (and mine) about the original 5.6kHz limitation for AM being too narrow.

3) I've seen the statement, "It's not a widespread problem by anyone's definition" and similar. Hmmmm. Having been personally clobbered twice by these guys during QSOs in less than a year, I would have to define it as a problem. Whether you can actually promote that to "widespread" is a matter for debate. I have a feeling it will rapidly get that way without clarification to 97.307.

4) Finally, the assertion comes up several times that measuring RF bandwidth on the air is "too difficult" or "too expensive" or "too technical" for the ham to accomplish. This seems a little odd, because members of my HF group and I have been doing just that for years -- to a lot better than the resolution necessary in this case.

Remember, we aren't concerned about bandwidth differences in the Hz, 10Hz, or even 100Hz range. People like myself who are in favor of specified bandwidths would be concerned about the difference between, say, 3.0-3.6kHz SSB BW, and signals that are 5kHz, 6kHz, or even wider. These differences are easily discernable using any of the modern receivers/transceivers, and most all older sets. You only need to know the basic specs of your filters.

Example: you're listening to a USB sig on 14.200 with a 3.0kHz filter (at the -3dB
points). This means that if you tune upward, the sig will appear to drop off somewhat on the S-meter at the upper edge of the filter, *IF* the sig is 3.0kHz or less. If there's no drop-off, go to your next-highest filter and repeat the process until you find where the sig starts to drop off. If you don't have any filters that are wide enough, tune a kHz or so up and find out where

the sig DOES start to drop off. With a little practice, this method of using the far edge of your filter will be plenty good enough to differentiate between borderline (3.6kHz) sigs and the *real* scofflaws (5, 6kHz-plus).

I guessed by ear that the first offending sig in #1 above was about 6kHz wide. I quantitatively verified that by using the 6Hz filter on my Racal 6790. The sig *just* began rolling off at the far edge of the filter. Good enough for me; and I'd guess good enough for the FCC. No fancy degrees or spectrum analyzers needed here.

--Mark Francis
  KI0PF
  Colorado, July 2003